THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) Some complaints have been received.

(b) The workload is reviewed from time to time and consistent with need, additional counters/staff are provided.

Purchase of Westland helicopters

*19. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1239 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th November, 1987 and state:

(a) whether global tenders for the purchase of helicopters were floated and were processed through normal channels; if not, the reasons therefor; if so, the details of evaluation; and

(b) by what calculations the entire operational higher cost and repairs etc. are proposed to be off-set?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) An Expert Committee consisting of members from the ONGC and I.A.F. evaluated the helicopters of the required type then available in the world market and narrowed down the choice of helicopters to the following:

1. SA 365 N (Dauphin)-manufactured by Aerospatiale, France.

2. S 70—manufactured by M|s. Sikorsky, USA.

3. Bell 412—manufactured by Bell helicopters USA.

Subsequently, this list was enlarged to include the W-30 helicopter offered by M/s. Westland Helicopters, UK, which was then under development.

After evaluation, SA 365 N Dauphin-2 and Westland-30 helicopters were approved for purchase taking into account the technical, operational and financial aspects.

(b) to off set the higher operational cost of Westland helicopters, an operating subsidy amounting to pound 10 million has been received by Pawan Hans Limited from M|s Westland. This amount was calculated on the basis of comparisons of direct operating cost and the financial and other concessions accompanying the sale offers relating to Westland and Dauphin helicopters.

अंधे व्यक्तियों को छूट

*20. **श्री सन्तोष बागड़ोदिया** : क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या वह सच है कि रेलवे अंधे व्यक्तियों को रेल भाड़ों में छूट देता है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो कब से दे रहा है और उसका प्रतिशत कितना है;

(ग) क्या यह सच है कि रेल मंत्रालय ने हाल ही में अंधे व्यक्तियों को और अधिक सुविधाएं प्रदान की हैं यदि हां, तो उनका ब्यौरा क्या है और क्या उनमें रेल भाड़े में और अधिक छूट दिया जाना भी शामिल है; और

(घ) रेलवे द्वारा अन्धे व्यक्तियों को अन्य किस-किस प्रकार की सहायता दी जाती है?

रेल मंत्रालय में उप मंत्री (श्री महाबीर प्रसाद) : (क) जी हां।

(ख) नेत्रहीन व्यक्तियों के लिए रियायत 1958 से लागू है। इस समय, नेत्रहीन व्यक्ति को अकेले या किसी मार्गरक्षी के साथ यात्रा के लिए पहले